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William R. Matz

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AT&T Legal Department

Attn: Patent Docketing

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EXAMINER

VAN HANDEL, MICHAEL P

ART UNIT

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/037,005	Applicant(s) MATZ ET AL.	
	Examiner MICHAEL VAN HANDEL	Art Unit 2424	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 October 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-28 and 31-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-28 and 31-37 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 10/03/2008 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

1. This action is responsive to an Amendment filed 10/03/2008. Claims **1-28, 31-37** are pending. Claims **1, 15, 36** are amended. Claims **29, 30, 38-50** are canceled.

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments regarding claims **1, 15, and 36**, filed 10/03/2008, have been fully considered, but they are not persuasive.

Regarding claims **1, 15, and 36**, the applicant argues that the independent claims are fully supported. The examiner respectfully disagrees. The examiner acknowledges Applicant's argument that incorporation by reference is permissible; however, the examiner notes that the portion(s) of the incorporated reference considered to be part of the disclosure must be pointed out with particularity in such a way as to convey to one of ordinary skill in the art that, at the time of invention, Applicant had possession of the claimed invention.

Art Unit: 2424

Further regarding claims **1**, **15**, and **36**, the applicant argues that the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. does not teach or suggest “storing the subscriber content-choice data in a database that stores television program data and Internet program data. The examiner respectfully disagrees. Vinson et al. discloses that set-top boxes monitor television program usage and Internet web site usage, and that all of this data is periodically transmitted to a central data collection server where data analysis occurs (p. 3, paragraphs 27, 31; p. 6, paragraph 82; p. 21, paragraph 303; & p. 22, paragraph 315). As such, the examiner maintains that the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. meets the limitation of “storing the subscriber content-choice data in a database that stores television program data and Internet program data,” as currently claimed.

Claim Objections

1. Claim **1** is objected to because of the following informalities:

Referring to claim **1**, the examiner notes that the phrase “the event timeline” lacks antecedent basis. The examiner fails to find a previous recitation of an “event timeline” in the claim. As such, the examiner recommends that the phrase be changed to “an event timeline” and interprets the claim in the Office Action below as though the recommended changes have been made.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

Art Unit: 2424

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

2. Claims **1-28, 31-37** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter, which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Referring to claims **1, 15, and 36**, Applicant states that support for “collecting subscriber content-choice data ... describing an event record comprising a command of interest from the subscriber, a time associated with the command of interest, a type of a service provider that provides the content chosen by the subscriber, and a name of the service provider providing the subscriber’s chosen content” is found in column 2, lines 40-60 of U.S. Application 09/496,825, which is incorporated by reference; however, the examiner fails to find support for the event record comprising a type of a service provider and a name of a service provider in the 09/496,825 application. The examiner also fails to find support for the event record in the 10/037,005 application. The examiner notes that, while Applicant may incorporate a co-pending application by reference, the incorporation by reference must be done with particularity so as to illustrate to one of ordinary skill in the art that Applicant had possession of the claimed invention at the time the invention was made.

Claims **2-14, 16-28, 31-35, and 37** are rejected as being dependent on the aforementioned independent claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

1. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

2. Claim **36** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101, because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. The claims are directed towards a computer-readable media; however, the examiner notes that the specification defines that the media can be a transmission device. Applicant's specification further states that the media may transmit or carry instructions to a computer and may include a router, private or public network, or other transmission device or channel (p. 28, paragraph 77 of Applicant's specification). The examiner notes that a claim directed to a signal *per se* does not appear to be a process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter. See **MPEP 2106.01** for guidance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims **1-8, 10-22, 24-28, 31-36** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vinson et al. in view of Grauch et al. (WO 98/31114).

Referring to claims **1, 15, and 36**, Vinson et al. discloses a method/system for receiving subscriber content-choice information, comprising:

Art Unit: 2424

- collecting subscriber content-choice data from a plurality of service providers, each service provider collecting the subscriber content-choice data from their respective subscribers (p. 7, paragraphs 94-104), each subscriber's content-choice data related to a subscriber's viewing preferences for content (p. 6, paragraph 82; p. 7, paragraph 94; & p. 8, paragraph 111), and each subscriber's content-choice data describing an event record comprising a command of interest from the subscriber (p. 3, paragraph 27), a time associated with the command of interest (p. 17, paragraph 256; p. 18, paragraphs 272, 273; & Figs. 22(a)-22(l)), a type of service provider that provides the content chosen by the subscriber, and a name of the service provider providing the subscriber's chosen content (the examiner notes that in targeting advertising content, an advertiser selects one or more cable television, satellite, television, Internet, or other service providers. Service providers implement individually addressable STB's. Since an advertiser can target ads to a particular user of a particular service provider based on the monitored user data, the examiner notes that the monitored user data is associated with the service provider and thus describes the service provider)(p. 22, paragraphs 319, 320);
- storing the subscriber content-choice data in a database that stores television program data and Internet program data (p. 3, paragraphs 27, 28, 31; p. 4, paragraph 43; p. 6, paragraph 82; p. 7, paragraphs 100-104 & Fig. 11; p. 21, paragraph 303; & p. 22, paragraph 315);
- receiving a request for the subscriber content-choice data, the request specifying the type of the service provider (p. 22, paragraphs 319, 320);

Art Unit: 2424

- querying for the subscriber content-choice data associated with the type of the service provider (p. 6, paragraph 89 & p. 22, paragraph 321); and
- responding to the request with the subscriber content-choice data (p. 22, paragraph 321) and with an event timeline (Figs. 32-35).

Vinson et al. does not specifically disclose merging the event record with data describing the subscriber's chosen content to form an event timeline that describes the subscriber's content selections over a period of time. Grauch et al. discloses using a collector, associated with a subscriber's set top box (STB), to obtain data about any "events" – subscriber actions or changes in programming – that are of interest. Event records comprising such data, as well as the identity of the application involved and the event time, are buffered and uploaded from the buffer to a merge processor through an interactive network (p. 3, l. 20-28). The merge processor receives the event data and content data that identifies programming content broadcast or delivered throughout the region in which the system is deployed. Timelines showing particular events over time may then be generated for each subscriber (p. 3, l. 28-30 & p. 4, l. 1-4). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time that the invention was made to modify the subscriber action monitoring system of Vinson et al. to include a merge processor for merging the subscriber action data with content data and to further include generating timelines showing particular events over time, such as that taught by Grauch et al. in order to match "raw" information on channels viewed with programming information (Grauch et al. p. 3, l. 14-15) and in order to provide a third party with individual subscriber data over time (Grauch et al. p. 4, l. 4-7).

Referring to claims **2** and **16**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the method/system of claims 1 and 15, respectively, further comprising assigning a classification to the subscriber's content-choice data (Vinson et al. p. 21, paragraph 306).

Referring to claims **3** and **17**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the method/system of claims 1 and 15, respectively, wherein the subscriber content-choice data comprises data relating to a television program received by at least one subscriber (Vinson et al. p. 6, paragraphs 82, 83).

Referring to claims **4** and **18**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the method/system of claims 3 and 15, respectively, wherein the subscriber content-choice data comprises at least one of date information and time information related to the television program (Vinson et al. p. 6, paragraph 83).

Referring to claims **5** and **19**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the method/system of claims 1 and 15, respectively, wherein the subscriber content-choice data further comprises data relating to the subscriber (Vinson et al. p. 6, paragraph 84).

Referring to claims **6** and **20**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the method/system of claims 5 and 15, respectively, wherein the data relating to the subscriber comprises a subscriber identifier (Vinson et al. p. 21, paragraph 304).

Referring to claims **7** and **21**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the method/system of claims 5 and 15, respectively, wherein the data relating to the subscriber comprises demographic data (Vinson et al. p. 8, paragraph 114).

Art Unit: 2424

Referring to claims **8** and **22**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the method/system of claims 1 and 15, respectively, wherein the subscriber content-choice data further comprises data relating to a subscriber system (Vinson et al. p. 7, paragraph 97).

Referring to claims **10** and **24**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the method/system of claims 1 and 15, respectively, wherein the subscriber content-choice data comprises data relating to an advertisement received by the subscriber (Vinson et al. p. 21, paragraph 306).

Referring to claims **11** and **25**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the method/system of claims 1 and 15, respectively, wherein the subscriber content-choice data comprises data relating to a viewing pattern of the subscriber (Vinson et al. p. 12, paragraph 171).

Referring to claims **12** and **26**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the method/system of claims 1 and 15, respectively, wherein receiving the request for the subscriber content-choice data comprises receiving an electronic request form that is standardized for all the service providers (Vinson et al. p. 6, paragraphs 89-91; p. 8, paragraph 105; & Figs. 26-35).

Referring to claims **13** and **27**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the method/system of claims 1 and 15, respectively, further comprising periodically requesting that the service providers send their respective subscriber content-choice data for storage in the database (Vinson et al. p. 7, paragraphs 99-102).

Art Unit: 2424

Referring to claims **14** and **28**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the method/system of claims 1 and 15, respectively, further comprising sorting the collected subscriber content-choice data (Vinson et al. p. 8, paragraphs 112, 113).

Referring to claim **31**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the system of claim 15, further comprising means for selecting the subscriber content-choice data based on geographic location (Vinson et al. p. 6, paragraph 90).

Referring to claim **32**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the system of claim 15, further comprising means for selecting the subscriber content-choice data based on subscriber classification data (Vinson et al. p. 6, paragraph 90).

Referring to claim **33**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the system of claim 15, further comprising means for selecting the subscriber content-choice data based on data relating to television programs viewed by a plurality of subscribers (Vinson et al. p. 6, paragraph 90).

Referring to claim **34**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the system of claim 15, further comprising means for selecting the subscriber content-choice data based on data relating to advertisements viewed by a plurality of subscribers (Vinson et al. p. 21, paragraph 304).

Referring to claim **35**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the system of claim 15, further comprising means for selecting the subscriber content-choice data based on at least one of a viewing date and a geographic location (Vinson et al. p. 22, paragraph 320).

Art Unit: 2424

3. Claims **9**, **23**, and **37** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vinson et al. in view of Grauch et al. and further in view of Eldering et al.

Referring to claims **9**, **23**, and **37**, the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. teaches the method/system of claims 1, 15, and 36, respectively. The combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. further discloses associating monitored user data with data describing service provider type, name, and geographical location (Vinson et al. p. 6, paragraph 90 & p. 22, paragraphs 319, 320). The combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. further teaches combining the monitored user data of multiple users and providing subscribers with access to the monitored data through a web-based system (Vinson et al. p. 6, paragraph 89 & Figs 26-35). The combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. does not specifically teach that collecting the subscriber content-choice data comprises receiving an eXtensible Markup Language file having linear data describing the type of service provider, the name of the service provider, and a location associated with the service provider. Eldering et al. discloses monitoring subscriber television viewing interaction and generating viewing characteristics therefrom. At least one type of subscriber profile from a subset of subscriber characteristics is generated. Groups are formed by correlating at least one type of subscriber profile. Groups may correlate elements of a content delivery system, such as head-ends (Abstract). Eldering et al. further discloses monitored viewing characteristics include network preference, genre preference, and geographical location (p. 2, paragraph 25 & p. 5, paragraph 84). Eldering et al. still further discloses aggregating portions of the monitored information to create a subscriber profile. The profile is stored in an XML format (p. 11, paragraph 134). The examiner notes that XML inherently stores data in a linear, line-by-line textual format. It would have been obvious to one

Art Unit: 2424

of ordinary skill in the art at the time that the invention was made to store the monitored user data in the combination of Vinson et al. and Grauch et al. in an XML format, such as that taught by Eldering et al. in order to use a standardized format to ensure that multiple data files can be combined and manipulated (Eldering et al. p. 11, paragraph 134).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MICHAEL VAN HANDEL whose telephone number is (571)272-5968. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00am-5:30pm Mon.-Fri..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Chris Kelley can be reached on 571-272-7331. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Chris Kelley/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit
2424

Application/Control Number: 10/037,005

Page 13

Art Unit: 2424

MVH